

St. Christopher's by the River  
Gates Mills, Ohio

Cuyahoga Co.

HABS No. O-212

HABS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. O-2

Historic American Buildings Survey  
William A. Bohnard, District Officer  
9815 Newton Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio

## ST. CHRISTOPHER'S BY THE RIVER

Gates Mills, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Owner: Episcopal Church.Date of Erection: 1853.Architect: Not known.Builder: Not known.Present Condition: Good.Number of Stories: - - -Materials of Construction: Frame, wood shingle roof. Stone  
foundation.Other Existing Records: None known.Additional data: (See following page)DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
BY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS,  
BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS  
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
WASHINGTON

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

District No. O-2 - Northern Ohio - Mr. William A. Bohnard

Project No. O-2-12 - ST. CHRISTOPHER'S-BY-THE-RIVER, Gates Mills

In the year 1826 Halsey Gates with his family and a small company founded the Village of Gates Mills on the banks of the Chagrin River. They established homes, a school, a store, and lumber and grist mills. The village grew, Mayfield became a main post road from Cleveland to the East and one of the Gates homes was made the "Eagle Tavern" in 1839. The same house is now the clubhouse of the Chagrin Hunt. The land opposite the tavern was leased by Mr. Gates to the Methodist Church and the main part of the present building was erected through his benevolence in 1853. In the lease it was stated that should the Methodist church cease to hold services there, the land was to return to Mr. Gates' heirs.

In 1906 permission was given the Episcopal church to hold vesper services in the church on Sunday afternoons. Bishop Stearly, of New Jersey, then rector of Emmanuel Church, Cleveland, was in charge. These services continued for three summers, to be resumed in 1926 under the care of Dean Francis S. White of Trinity Cathedral.

In the fall of the year 1926, a conference was held by the trustees of the Methodist church and the Bishop and Archdeacon of the Episcopal diocese of Ohio. Because the Methodist families of this community could no longer maintain the services of their pastor and in order that the worship of God should not cease in the old building, it seemed wise to the Methodist trustees, to relinquish all rights in the church at Gates Mills and that a mission of the Episcopal church be established for the cure of souls in this community. This change was accomplished and on Sunday, January 17, 1927, Dr. J. Frank Jackson held the first morning service as vicar. The George Shepherd house, next door, was secured as a vicarage.

Bishop Leonard appointed a committee to carry the responsibilities of the mission. The name chosen was St. Christopher's-by-the-River in memory of the good saint who carried the Christ Child across the flooded stream.

Bishop Leonard visited St. Christopher's on Sunday, February 6, 1927, celebrated the Holy Communion and blessed the church and congregation.

In the spring of that year, Mr. F. R. Waller was requested to draw

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#2

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

District No. 0-2 - Northern Ohio - Mr. William A. Bohnard

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Project No. 0-2-12 - ST. CHRISTOPHER'S-BY-THE-RIVER, Gates Mills

up plans for rebuilding the church when the title of the property should be cleared. A campaign was begun to raise money for the land, the rebuilding, and the expenses of maintenance for the year.

In the fall of 1927 the property was bought<sup>47</sup> at a public sale from the heirs of Halsey Gates. Mr. Walker's plans were accepted and Mr. L. C. Rogers began the work of adding a chancel and sanctuary and Sunday School rooms to the original church.

A peal of eight bells were cast in Droydon, England, for the church and installed in the tower and blessed by Bishop Leonard.

Sunday, May 26, 1928, Bishop Leonard dedicated the restored church at a service of Confirmation and Holy Communion.

A branch of the County library was established in 1928.

July 5, 1932, Dr. Jackson resigned. Having spent five years of loving service, the people saw him go with deep regret.

On October 1, 1932, the Rev. J. Keene McDowell, appointed Bishop Exner, began his services as vicar of the parish of St. Christopher's.

Our parish church stands today a living witness of the faith and courage, the love and devotion, of people of diverse faiths, knit together by the common need of Christian worship. In days past it served as a House of Prayer for All People; it still so serves! As St. Christopher's-by-the-River, the name by which it is now known, this little church still lives to comfort the sorrowing, to quiet restless souls, to welcome children into the Body of Christ and nourish them therein, to bless the union of those who seek Christian marriage, to strengthen departing souls as they pass from the life through the door into Life Everlasting. Daily her bells ring out the Angelus, proclaiming to all within their hearing the Good News of the Incarnation; they call the faithful to worship; they speed the happy brides and grooms on their way rejoicing; they toll the passing of our loved ones.

ADDRESS:  
CHIEF ARCHITECT,  
3065 NAVY BLDG.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

District No. 0-2 - Northern Ohio - Mr. William A. Bohnard

Project No. 0-2-12 - ST. CHRISTOPHER'S-BY-THE-RIVER, Gates Mills

A village church is St. Christopher's-by-the-River: here to  
serve the village . . . yes, the world of which this village is  
a part. For all who enter here are welcome: such is her  
glorious heritage, and such is her promise for the future.  
This little church

"may lift

Some grovelling face to see the blessed sky;  
Master a soul, and yield it back to life  
Tempered against the evil days to be.

A little thing, this church? Remove its roots  
Ossa upon Pelion would not fill the pit."

DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
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Revised 1921 R. F.

St. Christopher's-by-the-River  
Gates Mills, Ohio

HABS No. G-212

Owner (or Custodian) Church

Date of Erection Built about 1857

Architect

Builder F. R. Walker

Present Condition In good condition

Number of Stories One story

Materials of Construction Frame building. Wood  
shingle roof. Stone  
foundation.

Other Existing Records: Three photographs  
Three pages of history

Additional Data:

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St. Christopher's-by-the-River  
Gates Mills, Ohio

WABS No. C-212

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Addendum To  
St. Christopher's-By-The-River  
Old Mill Road  
Gates Mills  
Cuyahoga County  
Ohio

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